

8th Grade Homestudy Lesson #7

The Ninth & Tenth Commandments

GOAL

The goal of this lesson is for you to understand that the ninth commandment calls us to purity in our minds, in our hearts, and through our actions and to understand that the tenth commandment calls you to have the right attitude toward your possessions.

The Ten Commandments

1. I am the Lord your God, you shall not have any other gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Keep holy the Lord's day.
4. Honor your father and mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- 9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.**
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's possessions.**

MAIN IDEAS

- There will always be a struggle against the disordered desires we have, but we can battle and fight for purity by practicing chastity and modesty, as well as remaining diligent in prayer.
- The ninth commandment calls us to live lives of purity in what we think, what we see, what we say, and how we act.
- Purity in our hearts allows us to see the way God sees — most especially to accept and love our neighbors as ourselves.
- It is not bad to want what other people have, so long as this desire does not drive us to act in a sinful way.
- The tenth commandment warns us of the desire for earthly things, especially when it leads us to greed, passion for riches or power, and envy.
- Jesus calls us to love Him above all else and to be detached from all earthly riches. This is not easy, but God's grace helps us turn from the things of the world to the one who will truly fill our hearts.

TEACHING
9TH COMMANDMENT
ARM YOURSELF

When it comes to battle, it is important to have a good strategy, weapons, and armor. You may not always think of your spiritual life as an exciting battle, but there is always a battle going on, whether you know it or not. There is a constant battle between good and evil, and we face many small battles every day for our own dignity and the dignity of others. Every human being has dignity and is worthy of being honored and esteemed simply for who they are — not for what they look like, what they own, or the people they hang out with. In fighting the battle for our dignity and the dignity of others, we must learn the self-mastery of chastity and living a life of virtue. Chastity and virtue are like the armor we put on before going into battle. By living chaste lives and practicing virtue, we treat others as they ought to be treated and protect ourselves from being treated in a way that would not respect our dignity. (CCC 2520)

PURITY OF HEART

Since the ninth commandment states, “you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife,” you may think it does not have anything to do with you as a middle schooler, but it actually applies to your life now in practicing what is called “purity of heart.” Purity of heart means that we learn to fight against and overcome the desires and thoughts that are a consequence of sin and will lead us to sin. (CCC 2514-2516) The only way to overcome these thoughts and desires is to live lives of love and truth, filled with God’s grace, as we strive to follow all He has taught us. (CCC 2517-2518) Just like soldiers train endlessly for battle, achieving purity of heart is a long journey. You discover what it means to be pure of heart by learning what God teaches us about the right way to live, and then you have to be brave enough to live that way even if it is unpopular. Above all else, you will find purity of heart through prayer and spending time with God; the more you recognize God and what is of Him, the easier it will be to recognize and avoid the things that are not of Him. (CCC 2520)

Pause and read Matthew 5:8

The more you grow in prayer, the more you will grow in purity of heart; the purer of heart you are, the more easily you will see God.

FOR YOU/FROM YOU

Just like the previous commandments, this commandment is all about learning how to love those around us in a good and healthy way in order to strengthen our relationships. (CCC 2519) Following this commandment and fighting the battle for purity of heart is not only for your sake and holiness, but also for the sake of the dignity and holiness of the human community. We all desire to be treated with honor, esteem, and dignity; we can uphold these values in the way we look at each other, talk to one another, and treat each other. This commandment is not just about what we should not do, but rather, everything we should do to grow in purity of heart in order to show those around us their dignity and worth.

10TH COMMANDMENT

LIVING YOUR BEST LIFE

The world seems to promise us happiness as long as we have all of the right things. If we are not happy with what we have, there is a newer version that will make us happier. Our pursuit of happiness in the material world can be endless. We will never feel like we have enough if we base our happiness on what we own. That is what God was getting at when He gave us the tenth commandment, you shall not covet your neighbor's goods. He is warning us that when we focus too much on what we have, what we do not have, or what other people have, we will become unhappy and can be led into sin. Jesus is not talking about the things we need for survival but the things that are beyond the necessity of life. (CCC 2325) It is not bad to want material things, especially if we get them through honest hard work, but when we continually focus on what we want or what others have, we can be driven to greed, avarice, and envy. (CCC 2536-2537)

Greed is when we have no limit to what we want. For example, greed might look like filling our closet with clothes we do not need or ever wear because we just want more. (CCC 2536) Avarice is a passion for riches and the power that comes with them. We see this in the attitude people have toward making money and desire to be rich and famous, as well as when they do not care at what expense they get there. (CCC 2536) Envy is a sadness we feel when we see something that someone else has, along with an unhealthy desire to have what they have, no matter what it takes. (CCC 2538-2540) We live in a material world. We need certain things to live comfortable lives, but we have to keep what is most important in life in perspective.

TREASURE IN HEAVEN

It is not easy to overcome the allure of money and possessions — they are fun, they are comforting, and they bring us a certain amount of joy — but they are not meant to be the most important things in our lives.

Pause and read Matthew 16:19-21

While it may not seem obvious at first, our hearts will only be satisfied in God. (CCC 2541-2543) God created us and knows what will make us truly happy. Jesus reveals to us the true path to holiness, which is to desire to be with Him more than we desire money or possessions. (CCC 2544) This commandment is not just for those who are rich but for everyone. We all struggle with the desire for material goods to make us happy or comfortable. God gives us the grace to turn away from an unhealthy love for our possessions and to turn to Him. He tells us that in order to attain heaven, we must learn to be detached from earthly things. (CCC 2544) We are called to find our comfort and consolation in God, not in earthly possessions. While this may seem impossible, when we let go of our worries over material goods and trust in God, we find freedom from anxiety and the constant pressure to have more. (CCC 2547)

Pause and read Matthew 6:24-34

It is not easy, but with the grace and help of God, we can find happiness and be free from our over-attachment to our possessions. (CCC 2548-2550)

FOR YOU/FROM YOU

One of the greatest challenges we might face in our relationships with others is comparison, or comparing what we have to what they have. It is not easy to be happy for someone else when they have the latest and greatest thing we want but do not have. We cannot treat other people differently based on what they own or what we can get from them; if we do that, we are simply using the person. As we continue to learn to love others as Jesus loves us, as well as to love our neighbors as ourselves, we need to have the attitude of sharing in someone's joy without letting that affect how we feel about ourselves. If we work toward detachment from earthly things, we will be able to have more authentic relationships and will no longer constantly measure ourselves to one another. This commandment calls us to live lives of gratitude, to focus on what is most important in our lives, and to pay attention to what we love most. When we learn to let go of the constant need for more things in order to be happy and learn to love Jesus and the people in our lives more than we love our possessions, we will find happiness

SEND

We are often so focused on what other people have, and what we do not, that we forget to be thankful to God for the blessings he has given us. It is hard to be jealous, envious, or ungrateful when we practice an attitude of thankfulness to God. Take a few moments to pray and thank God for the many gifts he has given you. Pray a Glory Be in thanksgiving for all your blessings. Below, write a list of the blessings that you are thankful for:

QUESTIONS

1. How does this lesson relate to the last lesson on the 6th commandment? How are they similar? How are they different?

